

Developing a Performance Measures Template for State Grant Workplans

March 17, 2006

Introduction

As part of the FY 2007 EPA President's Budget, OMB included language stating that "EPA will develop a standardized template that all States will use to develop and submit their State grant agreements." (See below for excerpt from the FY 2007 President's Budget). Successful implementation of this directive will require an ambitious effort by EPA and its State partners. This plan describes how EPA will work with the States to adopt a template for FY 2007.

Grant workplans typically reflect the diversity and geography of the States while still supporting the EPA national systems necessary for reporting and analyzing performance on a national, regional, state, or local level. Workplans often reflect the requirements of state legislatures, governors, and executive agencies as well as EPA. EPA's goal is to build on these sophisticated regional-state processes while ensuring they include the measures necessary to provide OMB and others with standard performance reporting as described in the language below.

Developing a performance reporting template with clear linkages to EPA's Strategic Plan will improve the ability of EPA to demonstrate results from state grants. It will increase the visibility of environmental and program outcomes in workplans and make it easier to compare and analyze data over time and across states. The following principles will guide EPA:

Principles

- Meets OMB's and EPA's needs for "consistent, meaningful performance information."
- Builds on current Agency initiatives to improve measures and the strategic alignment of grant workplans. Can facilitate Eco-Region measures.
- Minimizes the administrative burden on Regions and States.
- Augments current partnership agreement processes and workplans rather than negating or replacing them.
- Supports innovation and multimedia programs activities as well as core media programs.
- Achieves maximum buy-in from states, EPA programs, and regions.
- To the extent possible uses existing data sources or systems.
- Facilitates national implementation in year one.

Strategic Options

EPA believes the President's Budget language provides the flexibility to choose among a range of strategic options, the bounds of which are defined by the two options below:

1. Develop a template that would replace current categorical and PPG workplans in their entirety. The template would incorporate all environmental program activities and outcome measures, and link to EPA's strategic planning architecture.
2. Develop a performance reporting template that includes essential measures linked to EPA's strategic plan. The applicable sections of this template would be attached to and part of all categorical grant and PPG workplans.

EPA believes the second options better reflects the principles espoused above. It would also support current regional-state joint planning and priority setting and workplan development

processes. It recognizes the breadth, depth, and complexity of state grant agreements and supports their use as a management tool while at the same time providing OMB, the Agency, and the National Program Managers with the performance information they need.

Implementation

EPA and the States will accelerate and re-focus the current initiative to improve grant work plan performance measures. Successful implementation will require outreach to all States, development and analysis of various performance measure templates, vetting template options and making decisions, integrating the template into FY 2007 National Program Guidance, and working closely with our State partners to ensure they begin adopting the template in FY 2007. Below are a timeline and critical milestones for accomplishing these tasks:

Develop Plan for implementation; submit to OMB (done)	Mid-January 2006
State-EPA Workgroup (staff level) analyzes options; develops recommendations to joint State-EPA P & P Workgroup	February, 2006
EPA and State senior management discuss directive, principles, and approaches at State-EPA P & P Workgroup meeting	February 14, 2006
EPA issues draft NPM guidance with process for developing measures	March 1, 2006
EPA NPMs compile initial list of template performance measures linked to the EPA Strategic Plan	March 14, 2006
EPA discusses template and draft measures at ECOS Meeting in Charleston, SC.	March 20-22
Deadline for comments on NPM Guidance and draft Measures	April 7, 2006
EPA NPMs integrate templates into their national guidance	April 21, 2006
EPA and States negotiate FY 2007 workplans with template(s)	April – October 2006

Within the calendar above, which addresses key milestones, are intermediate tasks or meetings. The list below describes the intermediate tasks or meetings expected within the next 30 days.

Intermediate Meetings and Tasks:

- *Late March - April* – EPA outreach to States and associations continues.
- *Late March – April* – NPMs further define measures (e.g., calculation, data elements)

- *Late March and Early April (TBD):* Meetings of the State-EPA Grants Workgroup and the NPMs/Regions to further refine measures, template formats, and procedures.
- *April 7- 21 – Make* revisions to Template based on State and Regional Comments
- *Early April (TBD):* Next Partnership and Performance Workgroup meeting to review recommended measures, template format, and procedures.

FY 2007 EPA President's Budget Language on State Grant Workplan Template

MAKING GOVERNMENT MORE EFFECTIVE

Enhancing Accountability

The Administration believes that accountability improves a program's effectiveness and ensures resources are providing the intended results. However, while over half of EPA's budget provides grants to States to implement their environmental programs, EPA faces difficulties in getting States to report consistent, meaningful, performance information. To address this issue, EPA will develop a standardized template that all States will use to develop and submit their State grant agreements. This new template will include clear linkages to EPA's Strategic Plan and long-term and annual goals, as well as consistent requirements for regular performance reporting. It also will allow for meaningful comparisons between various States' past and planned activities and performance, making progress more visible and programs more transparent.